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AUTHOR Smith, Vivian E.; Wilson, Alfred P.
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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the content of journal articles and books dealing with the school principalship. The articles were listed in the "Education Index" and published from 1970 through 1973; the books were listed in the 1973 "Books in Print." A content analysis research method is used to determine the principal's functions in professional improvement and to indicate similar and unique functions at various school levels. Principal behavior is classified according to cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Frequency tables present the data. The study reveals 49 separate functions in professional improvement. (DW)

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# The Principal's Function in Professional Improvement As Defined by Content Analysis of Periodicals and Books[1]

Vivian E. Smith Greenfield Park, Quebec, Canada

Alfred P. Wilson Kansas State University

[1]This is one of a series of papers on the principals function as derived from authors of books and periodical articles from 1970 through 1973. Additional studies of the principalship are available by writing the authors at Holton Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.

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Since 1916 when the Department of Secondary School Principals was organized (The Department of Elementary School Principals was established in 1920), various concepts have been formulated concerning the expected performance of school principals. The divergent expectations of the principal have been reported by, among others, Horowitz, et al.[1], Sergiovanni and Carver[2], Chase[3], and Miklos[4]. Goldhammer[5] seems to summarize the results best when he states that the position of the principal is uncertain and ambiguous.

[1] Myer Horowitz, Gary J. Anderson, and Dorothy N. Richardson, "Divergent Views of the Principal's Role: Expectations Held by Principals, Teachers and Superintendents," The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, XV (December, 1969), p. 195.

[2] Thomas J. Sergiovanni and Fred D. Carver, The New School Executive (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1973), pp. 175-176.

[3] F. S. Chase, "How to Meet Teachers' Expectations of Leadership," Administrator's Notebook, 1 (July, 1953), 2-3.

[4] E. Miklos, "Dimension of Conflicting Expectations and the Leader Behavior of Principals" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Alberta, 1963), p. 7.

[5] Keith Goldhammer and Gerald L. Becker, "What Makes a Good Elementary School Principal?" American Education, Volume 6, No. 3 April, 1970), p. 11.

## PURPOSES

It is the purpose of this paper to demonstrate through content analysis the differences that existed in the public school principalship's function in Professional Improvement as derived from periodicals listed in Education Index (1970 through 1973) books listed in the 1973 edition of Books In Print.

## METHOD OF STUDY

Content analysis was the research method used in this study. The content variables or categories used were selected from works by Ocker[6], Melton[7], and Snyder[8] with selected categories being added. In addition, each time a behavior was classified under one of the categories it was also considered in a two-dimensional way. First, the behavior was classified as pertaining to elementary, middle, junior or high school. When no particular school level was indicated for a given behavior, the variable

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[6]Sharon Dale Ocker, "An Analysis of Trends in Educational Administration," unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska Teachers College, 1967.

[7]Joseph Melton, "Percetions of the Ideal and Actual Role of the Elementary School Principalship," unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, 1958.

[8]Willard S. Snyder, "Elementary School Principal's Perceptions of his Ideal and Actual Role," unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, United States International University, California Western Divioion, California, 1968.

was coded under the classification"Not Determined". Second, the behavior was classified as pertaining to the Cognitive, Affective or Psychomotor Domains.

No effort was made to tally the frequency with which particular categories of content occurred in a given publication after the initial recording had been made unless the category referred to a different level in the cognitive or affective domain of schooling. The cognitive levels are those defined by Bloom, et. al.[9]. The affective levels and definitions are those used by Krathwohl, et. al.[10] The psychomotor domain is that defined by Harrow[11]. Coder reliability was established by using Scott's index of reliability as outlined in Holsti[15]. Results of three raters showed +1.00 on classification of behavior (Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor) +1.00 on levels of the Cognitive, Domain and +0.77 on levels of the Affective Domain.

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[9]Benjamin S. Bloom, et. al., eds., Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1956), p. 15.

[10]Anita J. Harrow, A Taxonomy of the Psychomotor Domain (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1972).

[11]David R. Krathwohl, Benjamin S. Bloom, and Bertram B. Mosia, Taxonomy of Educational Objective, Handbook II: Affective Domain (New York: David McKay Company, Inc,. 1964), p.6.

[12]Ole R. Holsti, Content Analysis of the Social Sciences and Humanities (Mento Park, California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969), p. 140.

## Analysis

### Periodical Analysis

Table 1 reveals that a grand total of 49 tallies from periodicals were classified for the principal's function in professional improvement. Of this number, 12 (24.5 percent) were coded at the elementary school level, zero at both the middle school and junior high school levels, 19 (38.8 percent) at the high school level, and 18 (36.7 percent at the "not determined" level.

None of the authors of the analyzed periodical articles dealt with either the function of the middle school principal or the junior high school principal in professional improvement.

Besides classifying each of the 49 variables according to level of schooling, each of the variables was also classified as denoting a behavior belonging to one of the subcategories of the cognitive, affective, or psychomotor domains. Table 1 reveals that 26 of the variables were classified among the subcategories of the cognitive domain, 23 among those of the affective domain, and zero in the psychomotor domain.

There were more variables assigned to the cognitive domain (53.0 percent) than were assigned to the affective domain (47.0 percent). The writers stressed that the principals should be committed to the objective of improving themselves professionally and convincing others of the need for doing so, too. In additon, the writers emphasized that the principals should know how to achieve this goal.

Table 1. An Analysis of Journal Articles Denoting the Principal's Functions in Professional Improvement.

| Level | Total No. Tallies | Percentage Total Tallies |
|---|---|---|
| Elementary School | 12 | 24.5 |
| Middle School | 0 | 0.0 |
| Junior High School | 0 | 0.0 |
| High School | 19 | 38.8 |
| Not Determined | 18 | 36.7 |
| Total | 49 | 100.0 |
| **Cognitive Domain** | | |
| Level 1 (Knowledge) | 18 | 69.2 |
| Level 2 (Comprehension) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Level 3 (Application) | 3 | 11.5 |
| Level 4 (Analysis) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Level 5 (Synthesis) | 4 | 15.4 |
| Level 6 (Evaluation) | 1 | 3.9 |
| Total | 26 | 100.0 |
| **Affective Domain** | | |
| Level 1 (Receiving) | 1 | 4.4 |
| Level 2 (Responding) | 15 | 65.2 |
| Level 3 (Valuing) | 6 | 26.0 |
| Level 4 (Organization) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Level 5 (Characterization) | 1 | 4.4 |
| Total | 23 | 100.0 |
| **Psychomotor Domain** | | |
| Total | 0 | 0.0 |

Table 1 also indicates the manner in which the 26 variables assigned to the cognitive domain were distributed among the subcategories. It can be seen that 69.2 percent of the variables were assigned to level 1 (knowledge), 11.5 percent to level 3 (application), 15.4 percent to level 5 (synthesis), and 3.9 percent to level 6 (evaluation). No variables were assigned to level 2 (comprehension) and level 4 (analysis).

The distribution of the 23 variables classified in the affective domain followed the patterns established in the case of each of the five major principal's functions previously analyzed in this study inasmuch as many of the variables were assigned to the lowest levels of the domain. In this case 4.4 percent of the variables were assigned to level 1 (receiving), 65.2 percent to level 2 (responding), 26.0 percent to level 3 (valuing), 4.4 percent to level 5 (characterization). No variables were assigned to level 4 (organization).

Table 2 reveals that the variables were concentrated in the following categories: 6-1 (keeping abreast of current research); 6-2 (translating research into practice); 6-5 (professional reading) and 6-7 (action research).

An examination of Table 2 reveals that ten variables were tallied for category 6-1 (keeping abreast of current research). Three of the variables were tallied at the elementary school level, two at the high school level, and five at the "not determined" level. The writers emphasized that one way the principal can fulfill his function in professional improvement is to keep up-to-date with the current research in the field of education.

Table 2. The Principal's Function in Professional Improvement Assigned by Subcategories to Levels of Schooling from 1970 through 1973.

| | Subcategor | Level of Schooling | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Elem n-tary | Middle School | Junior High | High School | Not Deter-mined |
| 6-1 | Keeping abreast of current research | 3 | | | 2 | 5 |
| 6-2 | Translating research into practice | 1 | | | 2 | 3 |
| 6-3 | Attending state and national conventions | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 6-4 | Attending local instructional meetings | | | | 1 | 1 |
| 6-5 | Professional reading | 3 | | | 5 | 2 |
| 6-6a | Developing professional library - personal | 1 | | | | |
| 6-6b | Developing professional library - staff | | | | | 1 |
| 6-7 | Action research | 2 | | | 3 | 1 |
| 6-9 | Membership on committees of professional organizations | | | | 1 | |
| 6-10 | Support of system-wide in-service programs | 1 | | | 1 | |
| 6-11 | Workshops | | | | 2 | 1 |
| 6-12 | Miscellaneous | | | | 2 | |
| | Total | 12 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 18 |

A total of six variables was tallied for category 6-2 (translating research into practice). One of the variables was tallied at the elementary level, two at the high school level, and three at the "not determined" level. Two variables were tallied for category 6-3 (attending state and national conventions) one of which was assigned to the elementary level and one to the "not determined" level.

Category 6-4 (attending local instructional meetings) had two variables tallied to it, also. One of the variables was assigned to the high school level; the other, to the "not determined" level.

Category 6-5 (professional reading) received considerable attention from the writers of the analyzed periodical articles. Ten variables were tallied for it. Three variables were assigned to the elementary school level, five to the high school level, and two to the "not determined" level.

Two aspects of the principal's function in professional improvement were dealt with in categories 6-6a (developing a personal professional library) and 6-6b (developing a staff professional library). The variable tallied to the principal's function in developing a personal professional library was assigned to the elementary school level. In the case of the principal's function in developing a staff professional library the variable was assigned to the "not determined" level.

The role that action research plays as part of the principal's function in professional improvement was dealt with in category 6-7. A total of six variables were tallied to this category thus showing the relative importance of action research in professional improvement. The variables were almost evenly distributed among the levels of schooling. Two were assigned to the elementary level, three to the high school level, and one to the "not determined" level.

Membership on committees of professional organizations (category 6-9) was explored as one way the high school principal can improve himself professionally. There was just one variable tallied for this category and it was assigned to the high school level.

The principal's support of system-wide in-service programs was examined in category 6-10. There were two variables tallied for this category and they were assigned to the elementary and high school levels. The writers stressed that the success of such programs depends on the skillful leadership provided by the principal.

Category 6-11 (workshops) dealt with the principal's function in helping establish or organize workshops. There were three variables tallied, two of which were assigned to the high school level, and three to the "not determined" level. No reference was made to the elementary school principal's function in this area. No varibles were tallied for category 6-8 (pre-school teacher orientation activities).

Book Analysis

Table 3 shows that a total of 18 book variables were coded for the principal's function in professional improvement. Seven variables were coded for the elementary school level, zero for both the middle school and junior high school levels, nine for the high school level and two for the "not determined" level. Table 3 also reveals that 38.9 percent of the 18 variables were assigned to the elementary school level, 50.0 percent to the high school level, and 11.1 percent to the "not determined" level.

Table 3. An Analysis of Selected Books Denoting the Principal's Function in Professional Improvement:

| Level | Total No. Tallies | Percentage Total Tallies |
|---|---|---|
| Elementary School | 7 | 38.9 |
| Middle School | 0 | 0.0 |
| Junior High School | 0 | 0.0 |
| High School | 9 | 50.0 |
| Not Determined | 2 | 11.1 |
| Total | 18 | 100.0 |
| **Cognitive Domain** | | |
| Level 1 (Knowledge) | 2 | 25.0 |
| Level 2 (Comprehension) | 2 | 25.0 |
| Level 3 (Application) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Level 4 (Analysis) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Level 5 (Synthesis) | 4 | 50.0 |
| Level 6 (Evaluation) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 8 | 100.0 |
| **Affective Domain** | | |
| Level 1 (Receiving) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Level 2 (Responding) | 5 | 50.0 |
| Level 3 (Valuing) | 5 | 50.0 |
| Level 4 (Organization) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Level 5 (Characterization) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 10 | 100.0 |
| **Psychomotor Domain** | | |
| Total | 0 | 0.0 |

Each of the 18 variables was also classified as denoting a behavior in the cognitive or affective domains. No variables were assigned to the psychomotor level. Table 3 shows that eight of the variables indicated behavior which was cognitive in nature and ten behavioral variables which were affective in nature. This table reveals, too, that the eight variables which were assigned to the cognitive domain were classified among its six levels thus: two (25 percent) were classified in level 1 (knowledge), two (25 percent) in level 2 (comprehension), and the remaining four variables (50.0 percent) in level 5 (synthesis).

The ten variables assigned to the affective domain were classified among its five levels in the following manner: five (50.0 percent) of them were assigned to level 3 (valuing) and five (50.0 percent) of them to level 4 (organization).

Table 4 shows the manner in which the 18 book variables, which were assigned to the principal's function in professional improvement, were distributed among the various levels of schooling.

A total of three variables were tallied for category 6-1 (keeping abreast of current research), one of which was assigned to the elementary school level one to the high school level, and one to the "not determined" level.

A single variable was tallied for and assigned to the elementary school level for the principal's function in each of the following: translating research into practice (category 6-2), support of system-wide in-service programs (category 6-10), and supporting workshops at the building level (category 6-11b).

Table 4. The Principal's Function in Professional Improvement Assigned by Subcategories to Levels of Schooling from Analysis of Books.

| | Subcategory | Level of Schooling | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Elementary | Middle School | Junior High | High School | Not Determined |
| 6-1 | Keeping abreast of current research | 1 | | | 1 | 1 |
| 6-2 | Translating research into practice | 1 | | | | |
| 6-3 | Attending state and national conventions | 1 | | | 1 | |
| 6-5 | Professional reading | | | | 1 | |
| 6-7 | Action research | | | | 1 | |
| 6-8 | Pre-school teacher orientation activities | 1 | | | 1 | |
| 6-9 | Membership on committees of professional organizations | | | | 2 | |
| 6-10 | Support of system-wide in-service programs | 1 | | | | |
| 6-11 | Workshops | 1 | | | 1 | |
| 6-11a | Workshops - system wide | | | | | 1 |
| 6-11b | Workshops - building | 1 | | | | |
| 6-12 | Miscellaneous | | | | 1 | |
| | Total | 7 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2 |

Nothing was written by the authors of the analyzed books concerning the function of the middle shhool principal, or the junior high school principal, or the high school principal in these areas of administrative concern.

Similarly, a single variable was tallied and assigned to the high school level for the principal's function in each of the following: action research (category 6-7) and professional reading (category 6-5). In writing about the high school principal's function in action research, one author stated that while many principals do not have the time and some do not have the competence to get involved in action research, nevertheless they should work closely with others and encourage action research in their schools. The other author said that since it is important for the principal to be well read, not only in his own field but also in contemporary affairs and cultural subjects, he must consequently include diversified material in his reading to improve his own general knowledge as well as his professional power.

Two variables were tallied for the principal's function in attending state and national conventions (category 6-3). One of the variables was assigned to the elementary school level and the other one to the high school level. The authors stressed that the principal must make every effort to influence the board of education to provide funds to enable teachers and principals to attend educational meetings especially at the state level.

Two authors of the analyzed books considered the high school principal's function in serving on committees of professional

organizations (category 6-9). One of the authors said that the high school principal is obligated to seek leadership positions on committees of professional associations. The second author was more specific inasmuch as he wrote that the high school principal should be willing to be a member on committees of two types of professional organizations--those designed to keep them informed on curriculum developments and methods of instruction, and those which foster growth in administrative and leadership skills.

There were two variables also tallied for the principal's function in administering pre-school teacher orientation activities (category 6-8). One variable was assigned to the elementary achool level and the second one to the high school level. According to one author, it is the elementary school principal's function to organize a pre-school conference for his own staff and that he should give careful thought to developing a cooperative approach for organizing and adminstering this function. The second writer declared that the elementary school principal should use the pre-school teacher orientation activities to orientate new teachers to the administrative routine and policies of the school.

Two variables were tallied for the principal's function in dealing with workshops (category 6-11). One of the variables was assigned to the elementary school level and the other to the high school level. In writing about the high school principal's function in this regard, one author stated that the principal must understand the problems of planning a workshop for the responsibility of coordinating all group activities of the faculty rests

with him. The second writer said that in order to meet the challenge of continuous change, the elementary school principal should strive to develop new and improved workshops which will facilitate professional growth of the staff.

One author wrote about the function of principals in establishing system-wide workshops (category 6-11a). The variable tallied was assigned to the "not determined" level. The author stressed that the principals should conduct their own workshops to prepare for bargaining whether they were directly involved in bargaining or not.

No author wrote about the function of the principal in attending local instructional meetings (category 6-4). Nothing was written concerning the principal's function in developing a professional library (category 6-6), either for himself (category 6-6a) or for his staff (category 6-6b).